

relationship between Azerbaijan and the United States. I commend Ambassador Suleymanov's significant contribution to our legislative branch, working closely with Members of Congress to expand the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus and deepen the friendship between our nations.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF TIM P.
KEGEL

HON. GUY RESCENTIALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2021

Mr. RESCENTIALER. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Tim P. Kegel who passed away on May 22, 2021, at the age of 63.

Tim became a licensed funeral director in 1990, working with his predecessor for 10 years before taking over the business. He established Kegel Funeral Home Inc. in 1999 and ran it for over 20 years, helping the Finleyville community and the surrounding region bury loved ones with dignity. He will always be remembered for the kindness he showed grieving families throughout the burial process.

Tim was a lifelong member of the Finleyville Volunteer Fire Department. During his 45 years with them, he served as president and fire chief. Tim could often be found behind the wheel of his pride and joy, the department's vintage fire engine. He was instrumental in sourcing this engine and brought it to Finleyville in 2000.

His work as a public servant did not stop there. Tim served as deputy coroner in Washington County, which required him to be on call 365 days a year. Oftentimes he would have to respond to disturbing scenes in the dead of night or fight through inclement weather. Despite missing holidays and losing out on weekends, Tim continued in this position for nearly 30 years.

Within his community, he held the position of president for the Finleyville Borough Council. Tim served as treasurer for both the Sons of American Legion Post 613 and the Finleyville Cemetery Company. He was a devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church of Finleyville. Tim's neighbors will always remember his incredible warmth and impassioned storytelling.

Madam Speaker, Tim P. Kegel led a life of service to his community. From his 45-year career as a volunteer firefighter to his incredibly important work identifying and burying the deceased, his dedication to his neighbors was clear. I have no doubt Tim's legacy will live on in Finleyville and across southwestern Pennsylvania.

URGENT NEED TO PASS LEGISLATION TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE VOTING RIGHTS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the fierce urgency of preserving

the precious right to vote by passing H.R. 4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, H.R. 1, the For The People Act. I will continue the dialogue at a future time, when I discuss the importance of passing H.R. 40, legislation which I introduced that establishes a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans.

Madam Speaker, the serious damage to the precious right to vote occasioned by the right-wing, conservative majority on the Supreme Court demands that Congress exercise its powers under Section 5 of the 15th Amendment to restore the extraordinary reach and effectiveness of Section 2 and Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. As an aside, Madam Speaker, on the objection of VRA opponents to states subject preclearance having the burden to bail themselves out, I have long said that the states that were subject to preclearance under the Voting Rights Act earned their way in, so it only fitting that they earn their way out.

Madam Speaker, June 25, 2021, marked the 8th anniversary of the Supreme Court's infamous decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), which immobilized the Department of Justice from subjecting discriminatory voting and election law changes to prior review and approval, or "preclearance." It was predicted at the time by me and other defenders of the precious right to vote that the Court's misguided and naive decision would usher in a wave of state and local initiatives intended to suppress and nullify the rights of black Americans, persons of color, young adults, and marginalized communities to exercise the most basic act in the political process: voting. As we have seen in recent months, this prediction has tragically come to pass.

Not to be content with the monument to disgrace that is the *Shelby* decision, the activist right-wing conservative majority on the Roberts Court, on July 1, 2021, issued its evil twin, the decision in *Brnovich v. DNC*, 594 U.S. ___, No. 19-1257 and 19-1258 (July 1, 2021), which engrafts on Section 2 of the Voting Rights onerous burdens that Congress never intended and explicitly legislated against to ensure that: "No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision in a manner which results in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color, or language minority status."

Among these burdens, couched as "guideposts," or "suggestions" are that when reviewing claims that a facially neutral election law, policy, practice, or voting rule has a discriminator, and therefore unlawful, effect on minority citizens, courts are to consider the following matters:

1. An "ordinary burdens" or "mere inconvenience" exception;
2. Size of disparities in burdens imposed by the challenged rule;
3. Other opportunities to vote provided by a state's election system;
4. Legitimate state interests justifying the challenged voting rule;
5. The degree to which a voting rule departs from what was standard practice when 2 was amended in 1982.

Taken together, this Supreme Court cabal is saying to racial, ethnic, and language minorities: "What's the big deal, it's only voting. Just like with bad weather, sometimes you just have grin and bear a little inconvenience."

This Supreme Court majority has simply never understood, or refuses to accept, the fundamental importance of the right to vote, free of discriminatory hurdles and obstacles.

Madam Speaker, were it not for the 24th Amendment, I venture to say that this conservative majority on the Court would subject poll taxes and literacy tests to the review standard enunciated in *Brnovich v. DNC*. Their predecessors on the Court understood this, going back at least as far as 1938, when the Supreme Court held in Chief Justice Hughes' famous Footnote 4 in *United States v. Carolite Products*, 304 U.S. 144 (1938), that government action alleged to discriminate against "discrete and insular minorities" would be subject to "strict scrutiny" by reviewing courts.

Madam Speaker, you might be asking who are these "discrete and insular minorities" about whom the Court was referring? The answer is they were and are persons "excluded from "those political processes ordinarily to be relied upon to protect" them, racial and language minorities, and aliens, all of whom were denied the single most important tool for protecting and advancing one's interests in a democracy: the right to vote. It is useful, Madam Speaker, to recount how we arrived at this day. Madam Speaker, fifty-six years ago, in Selma, Alabama, hundreds of heroic souls risked their lives for freedom and to secure the right to vote for all Americans by their participation in marches for voting rights on "Bloody Sunday," "Turnaround Tuesday," or the final, completed march from Selma to Montgomery.

Those "foot soldiers" of Selma, brave and determined men and women, boys and girls, persons of all races and creeds, loved their country so much that they were willing to risk their lives to make it better, to bring it even closer to its founding ideals. The foot soldiers marched because they believed that all persons have dignity and the right to equal treatment under the law, and in the making of the laws, which is the fundamental essence of the right to vote. On that day, Sunday, March 7, 1965, more than 600 civil rights demonstrators, including our beloved former colleague, the late Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, were brutally attacked by state and local police at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as they marched from Selma to Montgomery in support of the right to vote.

"Bloody Sunday" was a defining moment in American history because it crystallized for the nation the necessity of enacting a strong and effective federal law to protect the right to vote of every American. No one who witnessed the violence and brutality suffered by the foot soldiers for justice who gathered at the Edmund Pettus Bridge will ever forget it; the images are deeply seared in the American memory and experience. On August 6, 1965, in the Rotunda of the Capitol and in the presence of such luminaries as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; Whitney Young of the National Urban League; James Foreman of the Congress of Racial Equality; A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; Senators Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Everett Dirksen; President Johnson addressed the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act: "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and